



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

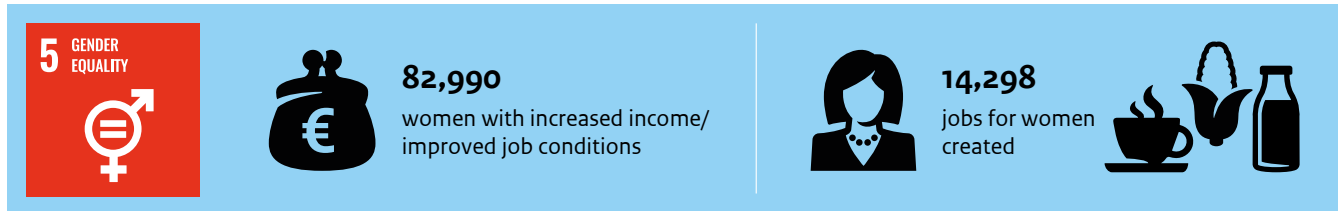


# Women and youth

*Learnings from public-private partnerships supported by the Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV)*

*>> Sustainable. Agricultural. Innovative.  
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## FDOV results



FDOV targets women and youth by engaging them in the value chain as smallholder farmers, micro-entrepreneurs, employees or customers. However, the inclusion of vulnerable groups does not happen naturally. To make a change, projects must be tailored to the needs of these groups. But how? Looking more closely at the FDOV project portfolio reveals how public-private partnerships can create equal opportunities for women and youth.

### Position of women and youth

- Women experience a range of gender-based constraints that limit their opportunities to participate in and benefit from value chains in the same way as men. These constraints are rooted in unequal gender relations, norms, policies (for example, cooperative membership criteria) and laws. They limit women's decision-making power and access to resources, including land, finance and information. Also, it reinforces an unequal distribution of unpaid reproductive work, gender-based violence and mobility constraints.
- Youth faces specific economic and social challenges such as unemployment or exclusion from education and health care. Also, the lack of prospects for better future results in high levels of migration out of rural areas.

The Facility for Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Food Security (FDOV) encourages public-private partnerships in food security and private sector development. Gender is a cross-cutting theme included in the project approval of FDOV. Youth is not an official cross-cutting theme, yet FDOV addressed it in individual projects.

### Targets for women and youth participation

FDOV projects that have successfully addressed some of these constraints explicitly focus on women and youth. For example, these projects target specifically the percentage of women and youth involved, including management or leadership positions. Depending on the crop and local context, project targets can be relatively high or low. The **Sustainable Maize Program in Ghana** targeted 20% of women participants (compared to 10% average women participation in the maize value chain). In addition, the Sustainable and Secure Smallholder Systems @ scale (4S@Scale) project targeted at least

50% women and/or youth participation. The project also prioritised economic activities intended to help them generate incomes, like diversification by coffee farmers into horticulture and dairy. The project also explicitly addressed gender issues along the value chain, like control over household income.

The **She Sells Shea Project in Burkina Faso and Mali** focused on strengthening women's entrepreneurship in a sector with a 90% representation of women. Representation of women is high in this sector because shea trees often grow on common lands, so harvesting shea nuts does not require land ownership. Yet, selling shea nuts is a season-dependent livelihood activity. The project provided additional sources of income for women by processing shea nuts into shea butter for export markets.

These 3 projects show many approaches to target women and youth. Some projects aim to increase women's participation in male-dominated sectors by breaking traditional patterns. Others focus on diversification into sectors with higher women and youth involvement. And yet others strengthen women-dominated sectors to increase their position within the value chain and, as a result, their incomes and livelihoods.

*"By addressing barriers to the participation of women and other marginalised groups and tapping into their unused potential, the impact of interventions in supply chains can significantly increase."*

- Nafisatu Yussif, Solidaridad West Africa Programme Officer

### Explicit focus throughout the project cycle

Projects explicitly targeting women or youth include gender analysis in the project design phase, preparation, implementation and monitoring. Project implementation needs to be flexible enough to allow for changes in project design to improve the inclusiveness of women and youth. For example, monitoring efforts of the **Sustainable Maize Program in Ghana** showed that the project did not meet participation targets. The project worked with a local NGO to conduct problem analysis and identify actions to address these issues. The NGO revealed that women preferred working with smaller plots of land because they had other tasks on top of maize farming. Many women were opposed to the membership system due to its collective risk-sharing feature. Based on these findings, the project partners decided to apply more flexible requirements for women's

membership in the cooperation (for example, reduced plot sizes) and abolished the group system. Women farmers also received extra support in marketing, business skills, and obtaining access to land. These changes increased women's participation from 5% to 20% within one year.

### Tailoring to target groups

Tailoring to women or youth means that project activities are designed differently based on the needs or constraints of these target groups. For example, the Every Bean has its Black project in **Guatemala** considered extra care responsibilities for women. Therefore it provided a place for daycare in the processing centre for coffee to support women during their shifts. The Food Security through improved resilience of small scale producers (FOSEK) coffee project in **Kenya** and **Ethiopia** worked towards improving the position of women in the coffee sector. The project hired a specific gender officer, promoted women's participation in leadership positions at all project implementation levels, and tailored training activities. In total 31,582 women (34%) were involved in farmer extension activities. The 4S@Scale project changed bylaws, facilitating women to become cooperative members. Women no longer needed to own land but a certain number of coffee trees as a membership requirement for the cooperative. As a result, women could now sell coffee to the cooperative in their own rights. Before, they had to ask a male neighbour or relative to sell their coffee. Women could also access other cooperative benefits such as credit access and extension services by becoming members.

### Engagement with male household and community members

Because of changes in role patterns and shifting power balance, men are not always supportive of women's (increased) involvement in value chains and women gaining their own income. Therefore, it is vital for projects to also engage with male household and community members. For example, the **4S@Scale project in Kenya and Uganda** paid attention to women's control over money by involving all

household members to develop a joint vision for the future where women would earn more money. The project worked with mostly men as 'gender ambassadors' to inspire other men and demonstrate that women's empowerment is 'ok' and has many advantages. For example, releasing the burden on men to be the sole income generator of the household.

*"The men now understand women's duties and are willing to contribute to some of their caring duties. As a result, some men have given women control over the coffee orchards as they now better understand where women have come from."*

– Lucas Chacha (Program Manager 4S@Scale)

As a result, men became more active in caring activities previously done by women and provided control over coffee trees to women and youth. Also, men became advocates at cooperative levels to include women in leadership positions.

### Creating job opportunities for youth

Some projects aim at creating job opportunities and reducing unemployment rates, mainly among youth. For example, the **Dairy Equipment Project in Ethiopia** focuses on the availability of quality dairy equipment for smallholder farmers. This includes hygienic milk buckets and butter churners. 3 production units have been set up at 3 technical colleges, producing milk equipment and providing vocational training to unprivileged youngsters. As a result, each year 250 students are trained with high job opportunities.

Moreover, the **4S@Scale project in Kenya** promoted and facilitated biodigesters to provide coffee farms with energy and better manure for their land. Youths from the community were involved in constructing and maintaining the biodigesters. Because of the overall growth in the sector, youths also started to engage in other jobs along the value chain, such as transport, picking, sorting, and applying fertiliser and pesticides.

The **Development of Sustainable Dairy Villages project in Indonesia** increased young people's enthusiasm for the dairy sector by modernising the dairy sector and introducing technology-based farm management techniques. For example, an automated milk registration and payment system. Youth indicated that being a 'modern farmer' is an interesting and promising profession.

Finally, the **Macadamia Value Chain project in Malawi** trained and hired 16 farmer instructors to train farmers on macadamia nut production. All instructors were younger than 35, and half were women. Sable Farming, the private Macadamia project partner, also intends to keep 8 of the 16 farm instructors on their pay list when the project ends.



## Conclusion

Projects need to be tailored to the needs of women and youth to make a change. Projects in the FDOV portfolio have many approaches to do so. Some projects aim at involving women participants following traditional gender roles. For example, diversification into 'women-sectors' or activities such as sorting and grading. Others create new opportunities for women that break role patterns. The latter may have more substantial potential to move towards gender equality. However, this may involve more risks, costs and time. Other strategies to tailor projects to the needs of women and youth include adjusting cooperative membership criteria, providing a place

for daycare at work, and promoting women and youth in leadership positions. Gendered problem-analysis is vital to finding solutions for specific barriers that women and youth face. And engagement with male household and community members allows for joint planning and visioning. It also inspires others in the community about the advantages of women's empowerment. Jobs for youth are created along the value chain or in extension services through (vocational) training. Moreover, the modernisation of farming techniques helps attract youth into agriculture.

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